

**REMARKS**

Claims 1-16 have been amended to remove reference numerals, address antecedent basis issues, to use more traditional transitional language (“wherein” instead of “characterized in that”), and to address the objection of claim 8 lodged in the office action. The application includes claims 1-16.

The undersigned notes with appreciation the indication of allowability of claims 4, 5, and 9-16. Based on the amendments above and remarks below, all claims are in *prima facie* condition for allowance.

Claims 1-3 and 6-8 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b). This rejection is traversed.

U.S. Patent 4,635,550 to Brands is discussed in the present application in the paragraph bridging pages 2 and 3. As explained in the present application and as is shown in the drawing figures of Brands, Brands requires a supporting element or “filler portion” 37 which must be large enough to fill the entire gap and must be made with high fabrication accuracy in terms of shaping as it is intended to continue the curvature of the peripheral surface of the printing blanket cylinder. In contrast to the required tolerances in Brands, the invention permits the effective gap of the printing blanket cylinder to be reduced using simpler fabrication measures.

In Brands, the spacer channel between the ends of the printing blanket (42 and 43) are arranged outside, but adjacent to the gap. In the present invention, as explained at the bottom of page 3, both ends 11 and 12 project beyond the turned over edge of associated limb of the carrier plate. In each case, a supporting element for supporting the projection is arranged between the turned over edge of the associated limb and the inner side of the printing blanket (see particularly Figures 2 and 3 which show supporting elements 13 and 14; see also the text on page 10 of the application beginning at line 35 et seq.).

As can be seen from Figure 2 of Brands, Brands does not show or suggest two supporting elements supporting each one end of the printing blanket, where each end of the printing blanket extends beyond the turned over edge of the carrier plate. Quite the contrary. Brands shows a single supporting element 37 located on one limb which fills the gap. Brands also shows a configuration where at least one

end of the printing blanket does not extend beyond the turned over edge of the carrier plate. Further Brands could not be modified to include either of these two features without destroying the functionality described in Brands.

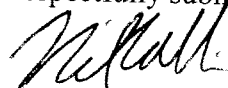
For purposes of clarity but not to change the scope as originally filed, claim 1 has been amended to recite "two supporting limbs" instead of "in each case". As noted above, Brands wholly lacks this feature. Further, for purposes of clarity but not to change the scope as originally filed, claim 1 specifies that the leading end and said trailing end of the printing blanket each project beyond a turned-over edge of an associated limb, instead of using the term "both". As noted above, Brands wholly lacks this feature.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully requested that the application be reconsidered, that claims 1-16 be allowed, and that the application be passed to issue.

Should the Examiner find the application to be other than in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to contact the undersigned at the local telephone number listed below to discuss any other changes deemed necessary in a telephonic or personal interview.

A provisional petition is hereby made for any extension of time necessary for the continued pendency during the life of this application. Please charge any fees for such provisional petition and any deficiencies in fees and credit any overpayment of fees to Attorney's Deposit Account No. 50-2041.

Respectfully submitted,



Michael E. Whitham

Reg. No. 32,635

Whitham, Curtis & Christofferson, P.C.  
11491 Sunset Hills Road, Suite 340  
Reston, VA 20190

Tel. (703) 787-9400  
Fax. (703) 787-7557

Customer No.: 30743